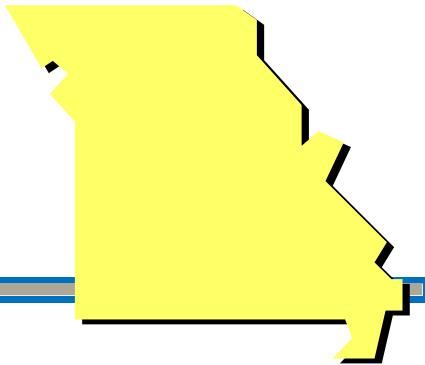


# Missouri Student Survey

## 2012 Alcohol Short Report



**Missouri Department of Mental Health**

**Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse**



**This report was prepared for the State of Missouri by:**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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According to the 2010 report of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, (NSDUH)<sup>1</sup> national rates of use in adolescents are declining for several of the more prevalent substances. Among youth aged 12 to 17, 30-day use of alcohol has decreased from 17.6% in 2002 to 13.6% in 2010.

Research shows that engaging in risky behaviors such as substance use puts many school-aged youth at risk for injury, disease, and loss of life. Nationwide, the majority of deaths among those ages 10-24 are attributed to only four causes: motor vehicle crashes (31%), homicide (15%), suicide (11%), and other unintentional injuries (14%).<sup>2</sup> In 2009, 15% of drivers ages 16-20 involved in fatal crashes had a blood alcohol content of 0.08 g/dl or higher (NHTSA, 2009). Alcohol abuse can, moreover, result in family dysfunction, job loss, and overall loss of quality of life.

### **The Missouri Student Survey**

Every even numbered year since 2000, the Missouri Departments of Mental Health (DMH) and Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have conducted the Missouri Student Survey (MSS) to monitor substance use and related behaviors of adolescent youth. All public middle and high schools are asked to participate by surveying students in ninth grade and one other grade between 6 and 12. The 2012 survey was administered to 108,526 children and adolescents. After data cleaning and sample adjustments, the sample size equaled 93,975.

This short report describes the results from the MSS regarding alcohol use. For more details on the Missouri Student Survey, see the full report found at <http://dmh.mo.gov/ada/rpts/survey.htm>.

## **ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION**

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### **Lifetime & Past Month (30-day) Substance Use**

Comparing Missouri youth alcohol use with the national averages, both lifetime and 30-day use is slightly higher for Missourians.

**Percentage of Substance Users in Missouri and the United States**

	Missouri <sup>1</sup>		United States <sup>2</sup>	
	Lifetime	30-day	Lifetime	30-day
Alcohol	38.2%	16.9%	35.4%	13.6%

<sup>1</sup> MSS (2012), 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade, n = 98,140, average age = 14.45

<sup>2</sup> NSDUH (2010), 12-17 years of age, n (unweighted) = 18,614, average age = 14.03

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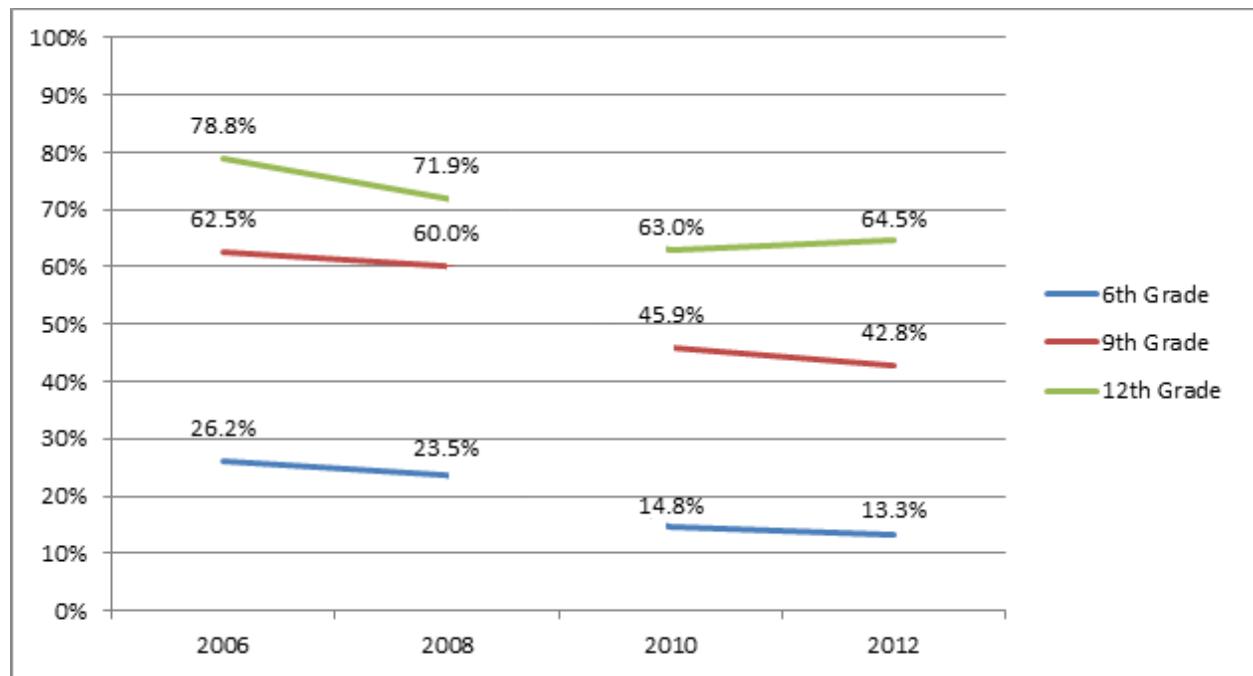
<sup>1</sup> NSDUH; <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10NSDUH/2k10Results.htm#2.2>

<sup>2</sup> CDC, 2009; [http://www.cdc.gov/NCHS/data/nvsr/nvsr58/nvsr58\\_19.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/NCHS/data/nvsr/nvsr58/nvsr58_19.pdf)

Across all grades, alcohol is the drug with the highest lifetime use, followed by cigarettes, inhalants and chewing tobacco. While there has been a decrease in reported alcohol use over time, there are also corresponding changes in question wording and methods of data collection<sup>3</sup>, therefore comparisons between 2008 and 2010 are not recommended.

Question wording and methodology between 2010 and 2012 was the same; this provides two years' worth of data to compare. The noteworthy change in this time period is in 9<sup>th</sup> grade use; students report a decrease in use between the last two administrations of the survey.

#### Lifetime Alcohol Use in Grades 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> from 2006 to 2012



6<sup>th</sup> grade n = 12,626, 9<sup>th</sup> grade n = 31,043, 12<sup>th</sup> grade n = 6,502<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> MSS switched from pen and paper to electronic version starting with the 2004 survey. The switch from active to passive consent occurred in most school districts with the 2008 survey. Beginning in 2010, a skip pattern was used so that a student who answered (for example), no to lifetime use of cigarettes would automatically skip over any further question about cigarette use. Prior to this, data was recoded to conform with the most specific answer (ex: yes to 30 day use would mean that a no to lifetime use was recoded as a yes). Question wording has also changed, primarily to be consistent with national survey wording. See

<https://www.mimh.edu/ProjectsandWebsites/tabid/783/Default.aspx> for exact wording.

<sup>4</sup> Sample sizes are for 2012 data unless otherwise noted.

### **Age of First Substance Use Comparisons with National Samples.**

Comparing Missouri data to national data, Missouri youth tend to start using alcohol at a slightly younger age. This is a similar pattern to other drugs in the survey.

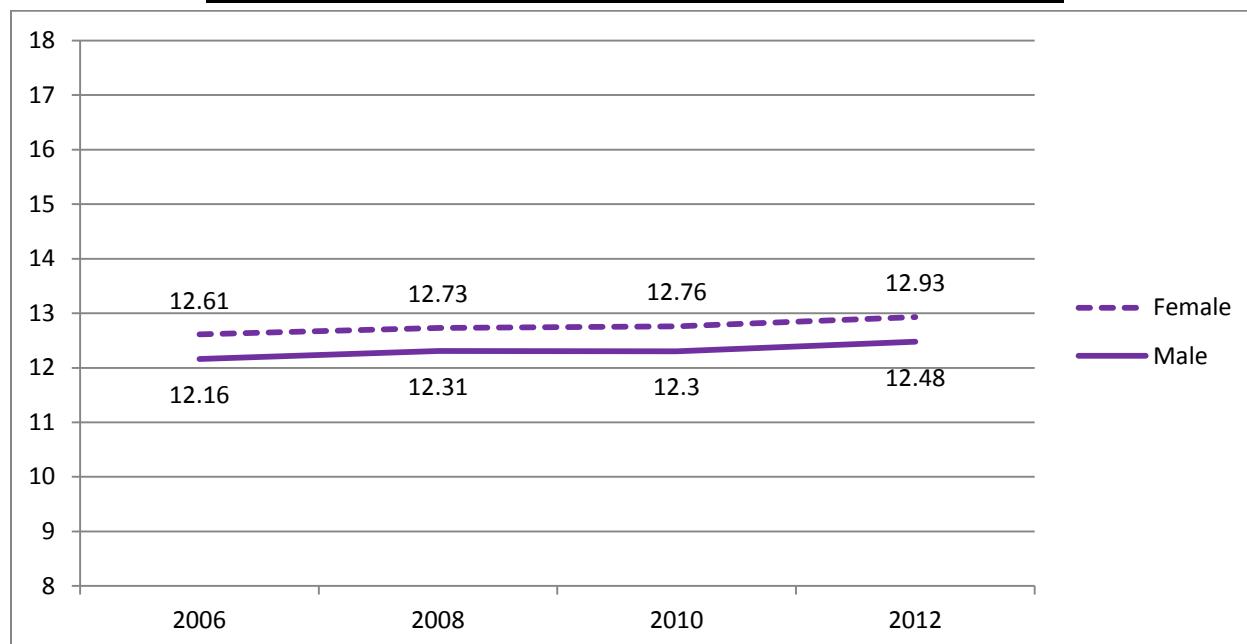
#### Average Age of First Use of Alcohol

	Missouri	United States
Alcohol	12.72	13.35

### **Age of First Substance Use by Gender.**

Females consistently use substances for the first time at a later age than males do. There is no significant change in the age of first use over time for either gender.

#### Age of First Use by Substance in Males and Females from 2006 to 2012



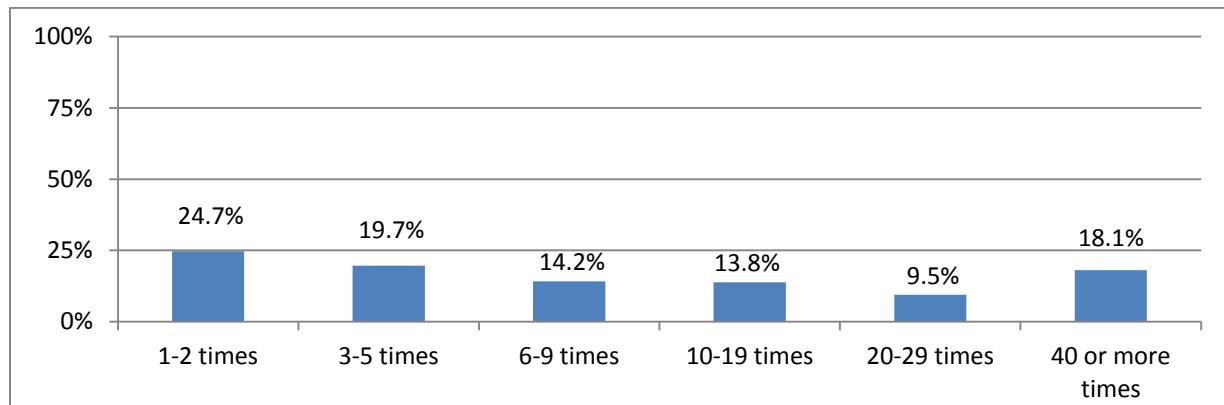
Female n = 20,734 Male n = 17,945

## ALCOHOL USE: EXTENT & CIRCUMSTANCES

As shown above, approximately 38.2% of survey respondents say that they consumed alcohol at least once in their lifetime while 16.9% said they did so at least once in the past 30 days. This section will discuss those youth who have consumed alcohol on at least one occasion, going into greater detail on the extent of their use and the behaviors surrounding the use.

Among those who had at least one drink in their lifetime, 44.3% reported that they used alcohol within the last 30 days while slightly over 1 in 4 (27.6%) students report that they had at least one drink of alcohol on 20+ occasions.

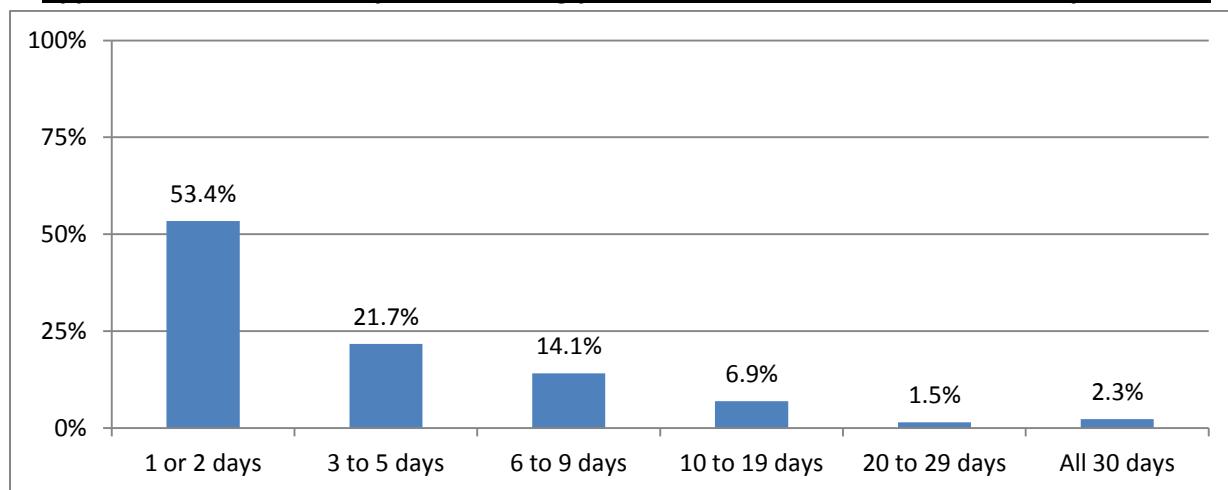
**Approximate number of times youth consumed alcohol in their lifetime, among those who had had a drink at least once**



n= 37,498

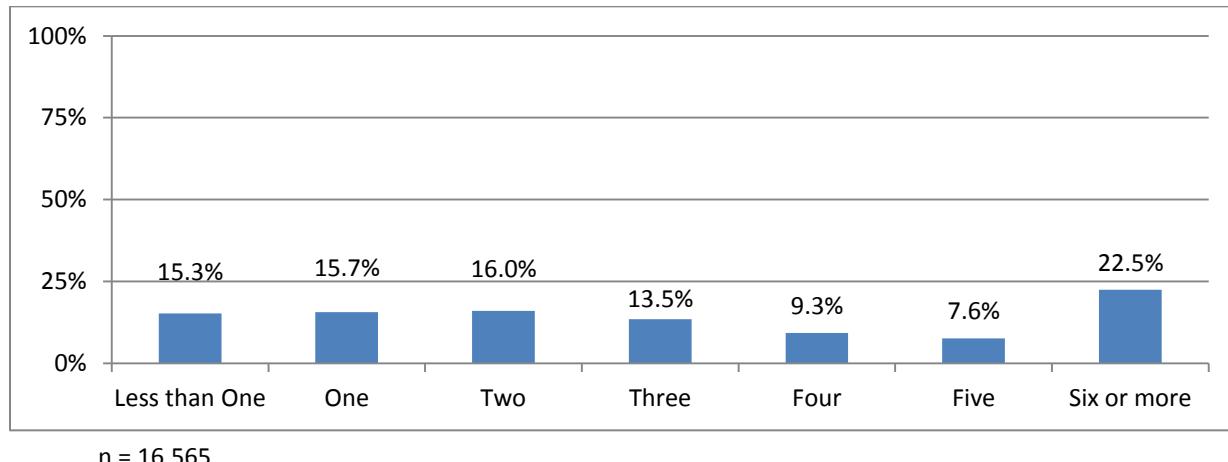
Among all youth who reported drinking in the last 30 days, over half of them (53.4%) reported drinking only 1 or 2 days. However, over half of them (58.4%) also reported having 5 or more drinks (binge drinking) during at least one of those drinking experiences. By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 69.3% of those who drink report at least one episode of binge drinking in the last month. This indicates that while youth did not drink often, when they did, many of them were drinking heavily.

**Approximate number of days of use among youth who had consumed alcohol in the past month**



n = 16,565

**Average number of drinks consumed (on the days that alcohol was used) among youth who consumed alcohol in the past month**



Other findings:

- Among all youth, 47.5% said they would “definitely not” drink alcohol if one of their best friends offered it to them, while 9.2% said “definitely yes.”
- Among students who were legally old enough to drive alone (16+), 8.5% drove a car or vehicle when having consumed alcohol while 19.4% rode with someone who had been drinking.
- Finally, 10.6% of current alcohol users consumed alcohol on school property at least once. Of those who consumed alcohol on school property, approximately half of them did it 1-2 days while 18.2% reported doing so on all 30 days.

## **RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ADOLESCENT ALCOHOL USE**

### **Peer Substance Use**

A majority of youth (51.6%) had at least one friend who consumed alcohol in the past year, this is higher than any of the other substances in the survey. This is also much higher than their own alcohol use (38.2% lifetime use). Of those youths who had at least one friend who used alcohol, the largest category reported was “four or more friends” indicating a large part of the youth’s social group was engaging in the activity.

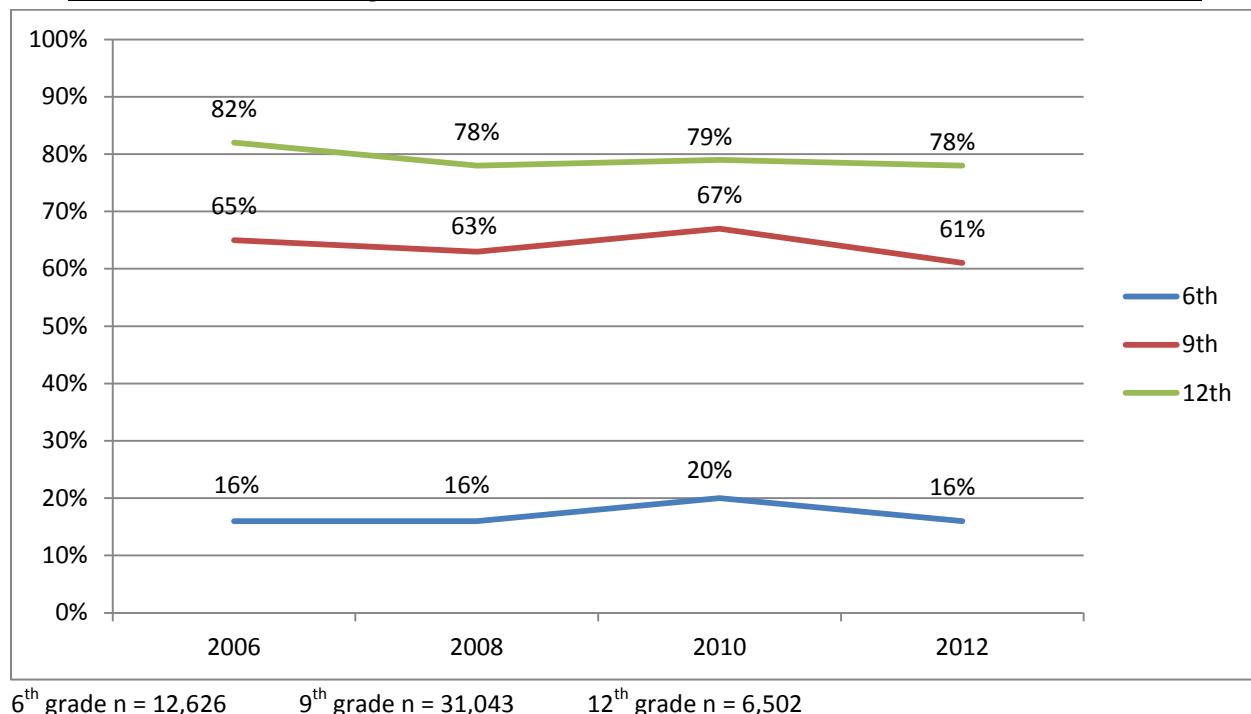
**Percentage of Youth who have Friends Use Alcohol**

	0 friends	1 friend	2 friends	3 friends	4 or more friends
Alcohol	48.4%	10.3%	9.6%	5.6%	26.1%

For students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, peer alcohol use has been relatively steady over time, with the exception of a slight increase in 2010 grade. These numbers subsequently decreased to numbers similar to 2006 and

2008. Students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade saw a similar uptick but 2012 numbers are the lowest reported over the last four survey administrations. High school seniors decreased from 2006 to 2012 and remained steady thereafter.

#### Youth in 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade with One or More Friends Who Use Alcohol from 2006 to 2012



#### **Perceived Risk of Harm from Substances**

Students were the least likely to report that alcohol use was of “Great Risk” compared to all other substances (cigarettes 50.3%, marijuana 52.9%, OTC drugs 48.8%). However, only a small percentage said that it was of “No Risk at All” and a majority said it was either a “Moderate” or “Great Risk”.

#### Youths’ Perception of Risk of Harm from Using Alcohol

	No Risk at All	Slight Risk	Moderate Risk	Great Risk
Alcohol	5.1%	24.4%	36.2%	34.3%

#### **Morality of Substance Use**

Similar to responses for the perception of harm, alcohol use was most accepted with only 41.1% reporting that it would be ‘very wrong’ to have a drink of any type of alcohol. The majority of youth thought that it was very wrong to use all other drugs.

#### Youths’ Perception of Wrongfulness of Alcohol Use

	Not wrong at all	A little bit wrong	Wrong	Very wrong
Alcohol	14.1%	24.0%	20.8%	41.1%

## Law Enforcement

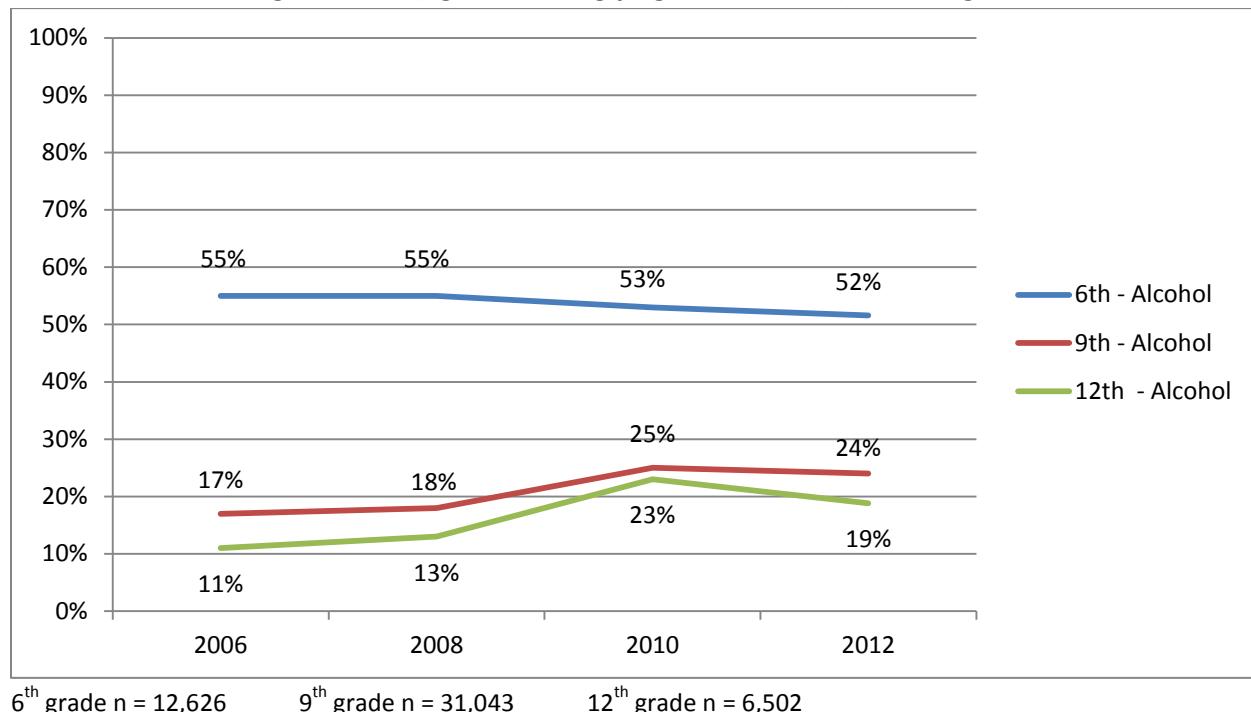
Most youth did not believe that the police would catch someone using alcohol in their neighborhood. This is fairly consistent across all drugs.

### Percentage of Youth who Think the Police would Catch Students Using Alcohol in their Neighborhood

	No!	no	yes	Yes!
Alcohol	24.2%	45.9%	22.0%	7.9%

Older students are much less likely to think that police would catch someone using alcohol in their neighborhood than younger youth. Among 12<sup>th</sup> graders, those surveyed in 2010 were more likely to say that they would be caught for alcohol use than those surveyed in other years. However, in 2010 and 2012, response options changes may have influenced the results<sup>5</sup>.

### Percentage of Youth in 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade who Think the Police would Catch Students Using Alcohol in their Neighborhood (Agree & Strongly Agree Combined) Percentages from 2006 to 2012



## Substance Availability

The majority of youth perceived that alcohol were either “very easy” or “sort of easy” to obtain.

### Youth Perception of Availability of Alcohol

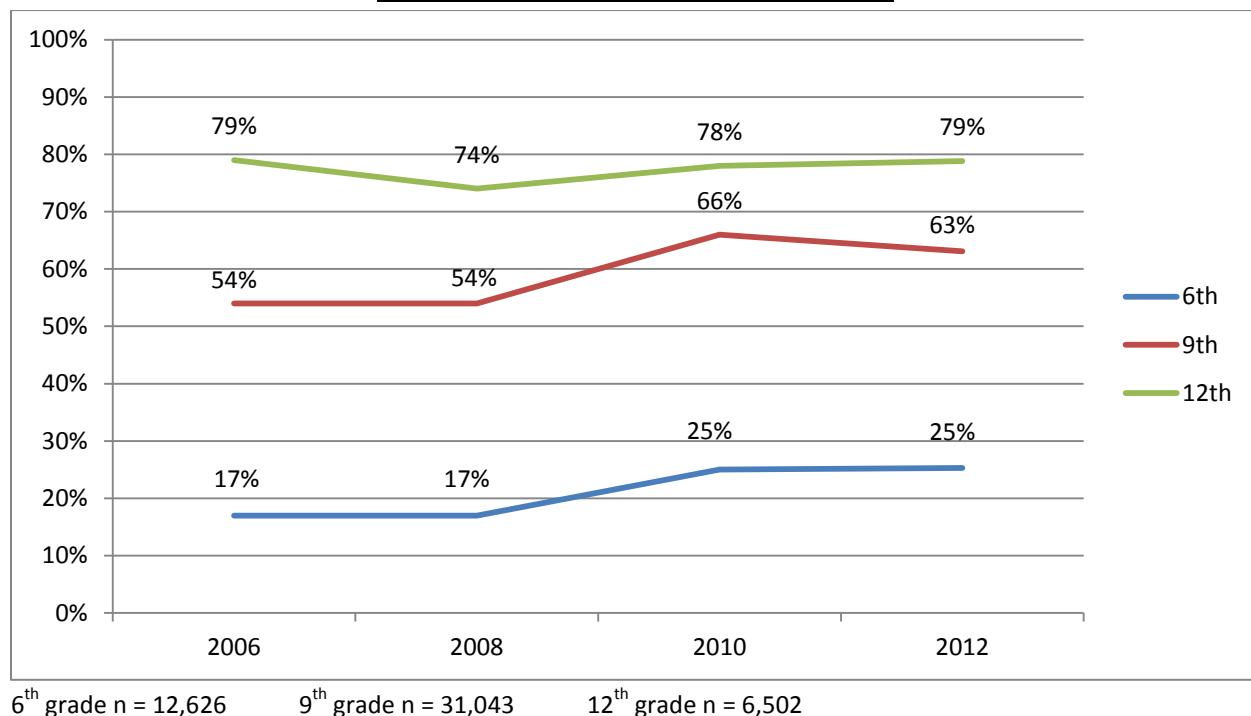
	Very Easy	Sort of Easy	Sort of Hard	Very Hard
Alcohol	31.3%	24.9%	16.5%	27.4%

<sup>5</sup> In 2006, 2008 and 2012 answer choices were: yes, Yes!, no and No!

In 2010 Answer choices were: Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree.

Older students thought that it would be easier to obtain a variety of substances. For example, 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported that it was approximately three times easier to obtain alcohol than did 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Trend data show cigarettes and alcohol are perceived as being somewhat easier to obtain by 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders in 2012 than those in 2006.

**Youth in 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Perception of Availability of Alcohol ("Very Easy" & "Sort of Easy" combined percentages) from 2006 to 2012**



## **CONCLUSION**

Alcohol is the most commonly used substance according to youth self-report. Students report a slightly higher consumption rate compared to national averages with a corresponding slightly lower age of first use. While the majority of youth who drink only do so on one or two occasions per month, it is especially concerning that these episodes often include binge drinking (5+ drinks in a single occasion).

The majority of youth report that they have at least one peer that drinks, although this number is slightly down in recent years, especially for older youth. While most youth consider drinking alcohol to be both risky and wrong, more than one out of four say that it is only a slight risk at best while more than one out of three do not think that it is more than "a little bit wrong".

The great majority of youth believe that alcohol is easy to obtain and that police would not catch a youth using alcohol in their neighborhood. As students get older, their perception of ease of availability and lack of enforcement increases.